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## Letter dated 30 April 2001 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Liberia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions of my Government, I have the honour to forward herewith a self-explanatory letter dated 30 April 2001, addressed to you by the President of the Republic of Liberia, Charles Ghankay Taylor (see annex).

The original of the letter has been delivered to the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Monrovia for onward transmission.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Famatta R. **Osode**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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## Annex to the letter dated 30 April 2001 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Liberia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We refer to our letter of 21 March 2001 in which we informed you of the successful efforts made by the Government of Liberia to comply with Security Council resolution 1343 (2001). We also proposed the establishment of credible and transparent mechanisms to confirm and verify the compliance of the Government of Liberia. While awaiting a response to our letter, we have presented to the United Nations Office in Liberia the complete dossier of evidence substantiating our compliance. We were also pleased to have presented similar information to Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani during his familiarization visit to the region. It is our hope that the Government of Liberia will be afforded the opportunity of addressing any outstanding concerns the Council may have in respect of our compliances prior to the 7 May 2001 deadline.

As a founding member of the United Nations, Liberia recognizes its obligations to fully comply with the demands of the Council. We are also aware of the disastrous effects that sanctions will have on our war-weary population. The country has not recovered from the trauma of its seven-year civil war, which completely destroyed its basic economic and social infrastructure. These problems have been exacerbated in the last two years by at least six armed incursions into Lofa County, out of the neighbouring Republic of Guinea. The most recent attack, which is still ongoing, has claimed the lives of hundreds of Liberians, including our Minister of Youth and Sports, and forced massive displacement of the inhabitants of the area, resulting in deteriorating humanitarian conditions. In effect, Lofa County, the bread basket of Liberia, has been turned into a wasteland.

The Government of Liberia was pleased to have received your recent statement, in which you "... underscored the need to address the underlying causes of this growing instability". However, Liberia continues to be the subject of a concerted military aggression. Forces loyal to the Government of Liberia have captured and presented to ECOWAS arms and ammunition supplied to the new Sierra Leonean army. No doubt, you recall the objection of Liberia to the recruitment, training and arming of Liberians as members of the new British-trained-and-equipped Sierra Leonean army. Additionally, we have confirmed reports that the Kamajors of Sierra Leone are currently participating in this bloodletting inside Liberia. The stated objective of this atrocious enterprise is to oust the Liberian Government by force of arms.

Of grave concern is the denial by the Security Council, under such hostile circumstances, of the right of a Member State to defend its sovereignty and citizens by the imposition of an arms embargo. The Government feels compelled to remind you that the first attack on Liberia occurred immediately after the arms and ammunition collected from Liberia's civil war were destroyed at the request of the Security Council. It is reasonable to expect that, with the imposition of an arms embargo on Liberia, the Council devolved upon itself the responsibility to engage in the collective defence of Liberia's territory. However, the apparent unwillingness, on the part of the Security Council, to be so engaged leaves the Liberian Government to wonder whether Liberia is not a victim of a carefully designed international conspiracy to subvert its Government and cause a free, orderly and peaceful people to be exterminated.

Of equal interest to the Liberian Government is the suggestion that the resolution imposes a regime of "smart sanctions", which are specifically targeted against only senior government officials and the domestic diamond-mining sector of our economy. Diamond mining in Liberia employs thousands of Liberians. This enterprise represents the only means of livelihood for a sizeable section of our population, in a country already saddled with over 85 per cent formal unemployment and 80 per cent of the population under absolute poverty. Compounded with this malaise is the international stigma which will be generated by the imposition of sanctions. Undoubtedly, foreign investments as well as development and humanitarian assistance will be discouraged; the task of rehabilitating shattered Liberian lives will be impeded; the reconstruction of our collapsed national infrastructure will be frustrated.

The destruction of our public infrastructure during the civil war was 70 per cent countrywide. To date, only 15 per cent has been rehabilitated so there still remains a huge gap in terms of rebuilding the public infrastructure to its pre-war level. Eighty per cent of the water and electricity facilities were damaged and have not yet been repaired. It will require over US$ 100 million to rehabilitate the hydropower station that was used to generate electricity to Monrovia and its environs. Our country has a high debt burden that currently stands at 3 billion, which needs to be reduced drastically before we have any macroeconomic framework programme with IMF and the World Bank.

The other social problem currently facing Liberia is the increasing incidence of HIV/AIDS, which stands at 8.2 per cent of the population of about 2.9 million. HIV/AIDS in particular affects the population between 14 and 49 years, which is the most productive age group in the country. The National Drug Service is funded by external resources, which have been drastically reduced to a level of 20 per cent and are further declining. The country will, therefore, soon face an acute shortage of drugs, which will have a severe impact, in particular on our women and children. Given the current weak economy and the war in Lofa County, my Government has not been able to meet its obligations within the social sector. In particular, if the food-for-work programme, which has been put in place to compensate school teachers, is reduced or stopped, it will negate the significant gains achieved over the last three years of up to 1 million children enrolled in school with a severe decline in the number of children attending school. Considering the deteriorating socio-economic situation in the country, the imposition of sanctions will inevitably and adversely impact on the quality of life and well-being of our common people, especially the women and children.

The Liberian Government hopes that by our voluntary imposition of a four-month moratorium on the export of diamonds, and by correspondingly proscribing the entry into Liberia of rough uncertificated diamonds from countries with certification regimes, we would have adequately addressed the concerns of the Security Council in relation to the alleged smuggling of Sierra Leonean diamonds. We remain hopeful that the four-month period will be sufficient to test the resolve and commitment of the Government and subsequently provide the technical assistance needed to establish its own certification regime.

Notwithstanding the objection of the Liberian Government, the resolution seeks to establish a nexus between the progress in the peace process in Sierra Leone and compliance by Liberia with the demands of the Security Council. Indications a e

that there continues to be progress reported in the peace process in Sierra Leone — a ceasefire agreement entered into by RUF and the Sierra Leonean Government continues to hold; UNAMSIL continues to deploy deeper into RUF-controlled areas; weapons seized from peacekeepers are being returned; and confidence is being built on the sides of both the peacekeepers and the belligerents.

The Liberian Government believes that this process must be fully supported by the Security Council and all other members of the international community and accelerated to include the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of the belligerents. These positive developments should, therefore, undermine any basis for the imposition of sanctions on Liberia.

Finally, the Government of Liberia does not believe that the underlying intent of the Security Council is to necessarily have the resolution implemented, but rather to afford the Liberian Government adequate opportunity and sufficient time to avoid its implementation by honestly addressing the concerns of and fully complying with the demands of the Council. The Government of Liberia believes it has successfully accomplished this objective. With this consideration, the Government renews its request to have it presented with any information or evidence that may contravene this fact, to facilitate its timely reaction. Unfortunately, inaccurate representations, persuading the Council to believe that Liberia could not be trusted, have been provided to the Council, in the recent past, by apparently misinformed but respected members of the Council.

The Government of Liberia avails itself of the opportunity to reiterate its unwavering commitment to the spirit and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and respectfully requests that you circulate this letter among members of the Security Council as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Charles G. **Taylor**